

AO 91 (Rev. 11/11) Criminal Complaint

D. Davis 6/29/16

## UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

for the

Southern District of Texas

United States Courts  
Southern District of Texas  
FILED

JUN 29 2016

United States of America  
v.Leandro Lichtenberger Jr.  
Jose Francisco Arredondo

Case No.

H16-990 M

David J. Bradley, Clerk of Court

Defendant(s)

## CRIMINAL COMPLAINT

I, the complainant in this case, state that the following is true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

On or about the date(s) of June 28, 2016 in the county of Fort Bend in the  
Southern District of Texas, the defendant(s) violated:

## Code Section

8 U.S.C. Section 1324(a)(1)(A)(v)(I)

## Offense Description

engaged in a conspiracy to knowingly or in reckless disregard of the fact that an alien has come to, entered, or remains in the United States in violation of law, transports, or moves or attempts to transport or move such alien within the United States by means of transportation or otherwise, in furtherance of such violation.

This criminal complaint is based on these facts:

See attached Affidavit of Special Agent Minh Tran

☒ Continued on the attached sheet.

Complainant's signature

Minh Tran, Special Agent

Printed name and title

Sworn to before me and signed in my presence.

Date: 06/29/2016City and state: Houston, Texas

Judge's signature

Nancy K. Johnson, U.S. Magistrate Judge

Printed name and title

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS

STATE OF TEXAS

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AFFIDAVIT

COUNTY OF HARRIS

I, Minh Tran, being duly sworn, hereby depose and say:

1. I am a Special Agent with the United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), within the Department of Homeland Security, and have been so employed for seven years. I am currently assigned to the Office of the Special Agent in Charge, Houston, Texas, Human Trafficking Group.
2. The following information contained herein is either personally known by me, or has been relayed to me by other federal agents, sworn law enforcement officers, or reliable witnesses.
3. On June 28, 2016, HSI Houston received a call from Richmond, Texas, Police Officer L. Ganey regarding a potential human smuggling case he encountered while patrolling Highway 59 in Fort Bend County. Officer Ganey is assigned to the Fort Bend County Narcotics Task Force and regularly patrols Highway 59, which is a known corridor for the trafficking of narcotics and the smuggling of undocumented aliens.
4. Officer Ganey was patrolling the northbound lanes of Highway 59 near the Hartledge exit in Rosenberg, Texas, when he observed a white 2008 Jeep Patriot SUV travelling 75 miles per hour in a 55 mile per hour construction zone which is a violation of the Texas transportation code. The Jeep was bearing Texas license plate HBS-2429 and registered to Michelle Villagran at 1506 Elvira Alice, Texas, 78332. Officer Ganey observed the vehicle pass the Hartledge exit and continue north on Highway 59 until the

next exit when they then pulled off the freeway. Officer Ganey also observed the vehicle to be weighted down in the rear area.

5. Officer Ganey spoke with the driver later identified as Leandro Lichtenberger Jr. regarding his travels and the occupants of the vehicle. Lichtenberger stated he was travelling to Houston and the occupants of the car were relatives/friends. Officer Ganey observed there to be a total of nine occupants in the vehicle which only had seating for five people. Lichtenberger who is from Alice, Texas, was driving the vehicle. Jose Francisco Arredondo who is also from Alice, Texas, was in the front passenger seat. There were four adult Hispanic males in the second row of seats and three others in the rear cargo area of the Jeep Patriot.

6. Officer Ganey believed Lichtenberger might be smuggling people and brought him back to his marked unit and read him his Miranda rights and conducted a field interview. This interview was recorded. Lichtenberger told Officer Ganey he was transporting the people from a location near Alice, Texas, to Houston, Texas, and was going to be paid \$200 U.S. dollars per person once he successfully transported them and returned to Alice, Texas. Officer Ganey also spoke with passenger Jose Francisco Arredondo and he did not give a statement regarding the other occupants in the vehicle. Officer Ganey discovered a single capped syringe containing liquid heroin in the glove compartment of the vehicle. Lichtenberger claimed it was his heroin for personal use. Officer Ganey tested the contents of the syringe and they tested positive for heroin. The syringe and contents were entered into evidence at the Fort Bend County Narcotics Task Force. Officer Ganey then contacted HSI Houston regarding a potential human smuggling case.

7. Special Agent Minh Tran responded to the Fort Bend County Jail where the occupants of the traffic stop had been taken by Officer Ganey. Agent Tran determined the driver, Leandro Lichtenberger Jr., was a United States citizen. The front seat passenger, Jose Francisco Arredondo was determined to be a United States citizen. The seven other passengers were determined to be illegally present in the United States. Of

the seven other passengers, four were citizens and nationals of El Salvador and the other three were citizens and nationals of Guatemala. They were no juveniles and all occupants of the vehicle were male. All nine occupants were transported to the Immigration and Customs Enforcement Houston Processing Center for further questioning.

8. An interview of Leandro Lichtenberger was conducted at the Houston Processing Center by Special Agents Minh Tran and Ray Lamb regarding his role after he was read his Miranda warnings and waived his rights. Lichtenberger stated he was called by his cousin, Roger Lopez, to transport the people to Houston for work. Upon arrival in Houston Lichtenberger would be paid an unknown amount of money. He also stated when he got to Houston he would call a phone number given to him by Roger Lopez to obtain further instructions on what to do with the people in the car.

9. An interview of Jose Francisco Arredondo was conducted at the Houston Processing Center by Special Agents Minh Tran and Ray Lamb regarding his role after he was read his Miranda warnings and waived his rights. Arredondo stated he was contacted by Leandro Lichtenberger for help to transport illegal aliens to Houston because he had access to his girlfriend's Michelle Villagran's Jeep Patriot. Arredondo stated he knew the people they picked up were illegal. Upon arrival in Houston they were supposed to be paid but he did not know how much. Lichtenberger and Arredondo picked up the illegal aliens south of Alice, Texas. They drove down a dirt road and stopped at a pre-determined spot and the illegal aliens who were hiding came out from the brush on the side of the road and got into the car. After they jumped into the vehicle they all headed north to Houston.

10. An interview of material witness Jose Alan Portillo-Rodriguez was conducted and he stated he is a citizen and national of El Salvador. Portillo stated he made his own way from El Salvador starting on June 4, 2016. Portillo stated he reached the Mexico/U.S. border near Reynosa and crossed into the U.S. on June 10, 2016. Portillo stated he was going to Virginia to find work. Portillo stated he agreed to pay a smuggler \$6,000 U.S.

dollars to be smuggled to Virginia and he already has paid \$3,000 U.S. dollars. Portillo stated he was guided on foot through the brush and walked for three to four days and was led to a highway where a white truck showed up and they were told to enter the vehicle. Portillo identified the driver as Leandro Lichtenberger from a photo line-up. He also identified Jose Francisco Arredondo as the front seat passenger from a photo line-up. Portillo stated Arredondo and Lichtenberger spoke in English mainly and they took them to a house after they were picked up and gave them some food before they continued on the trip. Portillo stated he was hidden in the rear compartment area with two other people.

11. An interview of material witness Ender Antonio Santiago-Sanchez was conducted and he stated he is a citizen and national of Guatemala. Santiago stated he made his own way from Guatemala starting on June 4, 2016. Santiago stated he reached the Mexico/U.S. border near Reynosa and crossed into the U.S. on June 20, 2016. Santiago stated he was going to Chicago, Illinois, to find work. Santiago stated he agreed to pay a smuggler \$7,000 U.S. dollars to be smuggled to Chicago and he already has paid \$1,500 U.S. dollars. Santiago stated he was guided on foot through the brush and walked for four days with a group and was led to a highway where a white truck showed up and they were told to enter the vehicle. Santiago identified the driver as Leandro Lichtenberger from a photo line-up. He also identified Jose Francisco Arredondo as the front seat passenger from a photo line-up. Santiago stated Arredondo and Lichtenberger spoke in English mainly and they also gave them some food before they continued on the trip. Santiago stated Arredondo asked for his cell number, what city and state he was travelling to and phone numbers for his family. He said Arredondo was angry with him when he did not remember his family's phone numbers. Santiago stated he was riding in the middle seat with three other people.

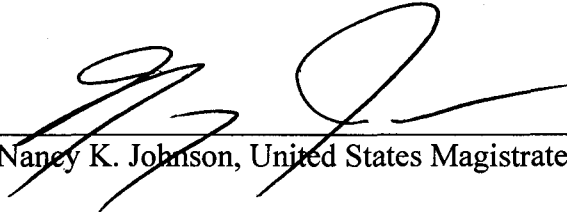
12. During a search of immigration databases agents did not find any previous encounters of Lichtenberger or Arredondo for smuggling aliens. Agents determined both had criminal histories when run in the National Crime Information Center database.

13. During interviews, none of the seven smuggled aliens stated they were threatened or harmed by the driver or front seat passenger and they made no exculpatory statements. All seven undocumented aliens identified Leandro Lichtenberger and Jose Francisco Arredondo as the driver and front seat passenger who drove them north from their pickup location from photo line-ups.

14. Based on the aforementioned information, I believe there is probable cause to believe Leandro Lichtenberger Jr. and Jose Francisco Arredondo violated the following statute: Title 8, U.S.C., Section 1324 (a) (1) (A) (v) (I), engaged in a conspiracy to knowingly or in reckless disregard of the fact that an alien has come to, entered, or remains in the United States in violation of law, transports, or moves or attempts to transport or move such alien within the United States by means of transportation or otherwise.

  
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Minh Tran, Special Agent  
Homeland Security Investigations

Signed and sworn to before me this 29th day of June, 2016.

  
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Nancy K. Johnson, United States Magistrate Judge